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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 002719

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY INCHING TOWARD MORE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN
PSI

1. (C) Summary: NP PDAS Susan Burk met with a Turkish interagency group May 12 in Ankara followed by a call on MFA DG for International Security Affairs Turan Morali to push for more active Turkish participation in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). The Turks noted that they were planning to observe PSI activities in 2004 and make their first "concrete contribution," offering an aircraft to an exercise in the Mediterranean, in January 2005. The GOT cited legal difficulties with deploying military assets outside of Turkey, even for exercises, and hoped to have these legal obstacles overcome by then. Burk and her delegation outlined ways in which Turkey could contribute to PSI without deploying actual military assets for non-NATO purposes, through experts participating in workshops where they could network and share information. The Turks welcomed these suggestions and agreed to try to send an appropriate delegation to the experts meeting and shipping workshop (vice local embassy reps) in Norway and Denmark in August. The GOT will look forward to receiving an official invitation from Denmark and Norway.
End Summary.

2. (C) NP PDAS Susan Burk and reps from NP, EUR and JCS visited Ankara May 12 to urge the GOT to more actively participate in PSI. They met with a Turkish interagency group composed of reps from MFA, TGS, Coast Guard, MND, the Turkish National Intelligence Agency, U/S for Foreign Trade, U/S for Customs, and the U/S for Maritime Affairs. The GOT side was led by MFA Disarmament Head of Department Bulent Meric, who began by noting that US and TU nonproliferation views overlap and are particularly important to Turkey because of its sensitive geography. Meric welcomed the April 28 UNSCR, which called for enforcement of international non-pro regimes. He added that Turkey has been favorably inclined toward PSI since its inception but has been struggling with two issues:
-- uncertainty about the GOT domestic legal basis for PSI, and
-- the Turkish constitutional requirement that all non-NATO related military deployments outside of Turkey be approved by Parliament, even for exercises.

3. (C) Meric said Turkey had decided to observe the operational experts group meetings to get a sense of how the initiative was evolving. But he noted that late notice about the meetings made it difficult to send the appropriate experts. Now the GOT was assessing how it could amend its legislation to allow it to more actively participate in exercises and what assets it had to contribute. It currently planned to contribute one aircraft to a January 2005 air/ground exercise in the Mediterranean.

4. (C) Burk welcomed Turkey's future contribution and outlined the genesis of the initiative, noting the interagency nature of its activities and the high interest of many countries. She emphasized that PSI was an activity, not an

organization. It was composed of a loose network of countries willing to work together on an important problem, each with their own capabilities and contributions. She added that Turkey has been a longtime partner in the field of nonproliferation and has many things to contribute to PSI besides military assets. One of the important benefits of the operational experts meetings was establishing points of contact with other countries. In doing so, PSI partners know who to contact if there is a shipment of concern. Because each country has its own legal structure and capabilities, there is no standard way to deal with suspect shipments, but at least partners would know with whom to discuss possible courses of action. In this vein Burk pushed the Turks to send appropriate experts to the operational experts meetings, rather than local embassy reps.

15. (C) Meric noted that the GOT had been told it should not attend unless it had something concrete to contribute. In addition, last minute invitations generally made it difficult to arrange travel. Burk said the next meetings in Denmark August 3-4 and Norway August 5-6 had been agreed to at the Ottawa meeting, which was attended by a Turkish embassy rep. She asked that the GOT begin planning for attendance prior to receiving the official invitation from Denmark and Norway and committed to encouraging the Danes and Norwegians to invite Turkey. She also added that some meetings were regional or functional, therefore Turkey would not likely be invited, or even want, to participate in every one. Meric said Turkey was ready to begin developing contacts and sharing info. The GOT would begin preparing for the Oslo meeting.

16. (C) Both sides agreed that the problem is complicated, but the two governments shared the same objective. The GOT seemed eager to participate more fully in PSI without having to deploy military assets to exercises right away. The US side underlined that participation does not imply a commitment on Turkey's part to do an interdiction. Burk encouraged the GOT to move toward conclusion of the EXBS agreement in order to facilitate non-proliferation cooperation. Meric said the GOT hoped to have a response soon, which he hoped the USG would accept.

17. (C) In a follow-on meeting with MFA DG Turan Morali, Burk and Meric gave a readout of the interagency meeting. Morali supported a more active role for Turkey in PSI, admitting that tight travel budgets made attending all of the meetings somewhat difficult.

18. (C) Comment: PDAS Burk's visit was useful in two regards: a) it clarified for the Turks that participation in PSI did not necessarily require immediate commitment of military assets for exercises, and b) it facilitated the gathering of all the relevant GOT agencies together -- a rare occurrence in Ankara. The GOT now seems eager to participating more actively in PSI and is looking forward to contributing military assets to exercises beginning in Jan '05. It had obviously not received word from its embassy in Ottawa about the Denmark and Norway meetings. Advance notice will hopefully allow the GOT to make arrangements for appropriate expert representation in future events.

19. (C) Burk Delegation has cleared this cable.
EDELMAN